

I. INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian assistance is an act of national conscience and an investment in the future. It is a response to U.S. values and ideals as it saves lives, reduces suffering, and protects health.

The United States has a long and generous tradition of providing assistance to the victims of disasters, especially women and children. The primary purpose of humanitarian assistance is to respond to crisis. It is not a substitute for long-term development programs, but does safeguard investments in economic and social development. Because emergencies are increasingly complex, USAID's responses are becoming more comprehensive. USAID involvement in politically significant areas such as Angola, Haiti, the Horn of Africa, Indonesia, and North Korea is evidence of the growing value of humanitarian assistance in furthering U.S. interests in peaceful transition and development.

USAID's humanitarian assistance goal is to save lives, reduce suffering associated with natural or man-made disasters, and reestablish conditions necessary for political or economic development. Three principles guide the Agency's programs:

- Emergency response, centered on saving lives and reducing suffering, should simultaneously lay a foundation for a return to sustainable development by supporting local capabilities and participation and reestablishing people's livelihood and self-sufficiency
- Prevention and mitigation of the effects of disasters should be built into response programs
- Timely, effective assistance to countries emerging from crisis may make the difference between a successful or failed transition

USAID provides humanitarian assistance in three broad categories—natural disasters, man-made disasters, and complex emergencies. *Natural disasters* are caused by physical hazards such as drought, earthquake, fire, flood, and pest and disease outbreak. *Man-made disasters* are caused by human error in design, implementation, operation, or management, such as a building collapse or industrial accident. *Complex emergencies* may include natural disasters such as droughts but are frequently caused or complicated by civil strife. They are manifested in armed conflict, death, displaced populations, hunger, and injury.

Complex emergencies are increasing in number and intensity around the world. In 1997 there were 25 major armed conflicts; all but one were internal.¹ Conflicts fluctuate in intensity and are difficult to resolve. Relief assistance is necessary to meet the basic needs of large populations for long periods. In addition to the challenge of responding to these disasters, USAID has a new responsibility to respond to terrorism and biological, chemical, and nuclear disasters in developing countries. USAID's work in complex emergencies and transition from crisis to relative stability is the subject of this chapter.

6

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

“American values mandate offering assistance and international leadership to help alleviate human suffering from crisis, whether man-made or natural, even when there may be no direct or indirect threat to U.S. security interests.”

—U.S. Strategic Plan for International Affairs, 1997

The rapidly growing number of complex emergencies has shifted the focus of humanitarian assistance somewhat. In the past, agencies such as USAID would provide food, shelter, and medical care to people who had experienced some sort of disaster and would assume, usually correctly, that they would be able to resume their path toward development as soon as the incident subsided. What USAID is experiencing is that this does not apply to most complex emergencies, because the most basic social, governmental, and physical infrastructure has been destroyed, often by years or decades of conflict. While there must be assistance to meet the immediate needs of those suffering from conflict, helping countries reach the stable, peaceful situation needed to resume development requires a much larger investment in what is called a transition program. In these programs it is sometimes difficult to see where humanitarian assistance leaves off and development assistance begins: often there is a significant overlap of the two types of assistance. Aspects of this will be discussed in section IV of this chapter.

The Humanitarian Assistance Strategic Framework

To achieve its goal in humanitarian assistance, USAID outlined a strategic framework that includes prevention, relief, and transition objectives.

- **Prevention: Reducing the Potential Impact of Humanitarian Crises**

Effective preparedness plans along with early warning and disaster mitigation systems help predict and lessen the impact of disasters and improve the ability of countries to cope with crises.

- **Relief: Meeting Urgent Needs in Crisis Situations**

Providing timely and effective emergency relief helps meet critical needs. Emergency assistance keeps thousands of people alive during disasters by providing essential food, shelter, and water.

- **Transition: Establishing Security and Restoring the Function of Basic Institutions to Meet Critical Needs and Basic Rights**

Helping societies and governments shift from emergency relief to regaining political and social stability is an important component of humanitarian assistance. Demobilization of ex-combatants and removal of land mines enhances local security. Strengthening local governance and institutions promotes reconciliation and helps reestablish societies. Rebuilding social and physical infrastructure integrates relief with transitional and development assistance.

AGENCY GOAL SIX

Lives Saved, Suffering Reduced, and Development Potential Reinforced

Agency Objective 6.1

Prevention
Potential impact of humanitarian crises reduced

Agency Objective 6.2

Relief
Urgent needs met in crisis situations

Agency Objective 6.3

Transition
Security established and basic institutions functioning to meet critical needs and basic rights

Distribution of USAID Programming

USAID administers several humanitarian assistance programs. A unique aspect of USAID's assistance is its cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in distributing surplus American food to those in need abroad. The Office of Food for Peace in USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Response manages the Title II Public Law 480 program, in coordination with regional bureaus and USAID Missions. This program provides the bulk of U.S. food assistance in emergencies and disasters.²

Other resources are International Disaster Assistance, which provides relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction assistance to victims of disasters, and Development Assistance funds. In addition, regional bureaus manage resources used for humanitarian assistance, including Support for East European Democracy and the Freedom Support Act.

Humanitarian assistance improves the capacity of countries to plan and prepare for disasters, mitigate their effects, and respond when disaster strikes. Funding supports longer term rehabilitation and recovery for countries in transition emerging from complex emergencies. These activities emphasize the special needs of countries emerging from crisis caused by political and ethnic conflict. They help nations return to the path of sustainable development, mitigate the impact of disasters, and minimize the need for future humanitarian and disaster relief. These programs are managed by USAID's

Transitions

In a rapidly changing world, USAID is involved in different types of transitions. Transition encompasses a variety of dynamic situations, often implying marked and dramatic changes in economic, political, and social areas. The Agency uses this word to refer to at least five different situations:

- From a society in conflict to a society at peace
- From relief to development
- From authoritarian types of government to democracy
- From a closed market to an open, market economy
- From receiving development assistance to graduation from assistance

Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Office of Transition Initiatives.

In all its humanitarian assistance endeavors, USAID works closely with other donors, international organizations, PVOs, and other U.S. agencies. Its partnerships with other groups enable USAID to leverage and share resources.

In 1997, 20 countries and regional and central USAID offices had strategic objectives supporting one or more of the humanitarian assistance objectives—prevention, relief, or the most active, transition. Fifteen Missions and offices had objectives to assist with the transition process. Nine countries and offices pursued objectives in support of relief and another nine each supported prevention. The annexes detail information on USAID programming in humanitarian assistance.

II. AGENCY PROGRESS TOWARD HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE GOALS

TABLE 6.1: FY97

**Number of People Assisted by Bureau for Humanitarian
Response Emergency Programs, by Region*⁴**

Region	OFDA (% affected reached)	FFP (% targeted reached)
Africa	15,606,000 (59)	4,890,000 (61)
Asia and Near East	1,470,000 (13)	3,718,000 (83)
Europe and the new independent states[†]	1,539,000 (68)	2,982,000 (95)
Latin America and the Caribbean	143,000 (61)	‡
TOTAL	18,758,000	11,590,000

OFDA is the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance;
FFP is Food for Peace.

* Office of Transition Initiatives programs (not included in table) include media activities that reach entire country populations, and demining activities that benefit refugees, returnees, merchants, and farmers who begin to use land and roads made safe. Determining the number of direct beneficiaries is difficult.

[†] Separate ENI Bureau programs reached 8.4 million beneficiaries.

[‡] There were no emergencies in this region in 1997 that required emergency food aid.

Note: There may be emergencies in which different USAID programs reach the same beneficiaries.

Measuring the impact of humanitarian assistance programs is challenging. First, it is difficult to distinguish between various causes and effects. Second, USAID's country and regional programs operate at different levels and have different objectives, making an assessment of overall Agency performance difficult. USAID recognizes that it must improve its analytic capacity in this area to design better strategic approaches that address a wider array of social, political, military, and economic issues. Although saving lives is the primary aim of most emergency programs, preserving and promoting livelihoods is becoming equally important to achieving effective economic and political transitions.

USAID, with other multilateral and bilateral donors, is beginning to pilot-test and implement information systems that will be used in emergency situations to monitor Agency capacity for saving lives and reducing suffering. In a preliminary effort to quantify the results of USAID efforts, the Agency selected the following indicators:

- Crude mortality rate in selected emergency situations
- Levels of acute malnutrition stable at, or declining to, acceptable levels in emergencies
- Number of people displaced by open conflict by region
- Changes in the number and classification of designated "postconflict transition" countries

Since humanitarian assistance operates in fluid, complex situations, these indicators will be initially applied on a pilot basis to determine whether data collection is feasible. Reporting on these indicators requires working with other donors and agencies that collect or report on these or similar ones.

USAID monitors both country-level indicators and operational-level performance. As part of the planning process, USAID identifies strategic objectives for programs. To measure performance, an indicator must have two elements: an *annual target* (derived from baseline data) and *actual data* on performance during the year under review. In 1997, target and actual data were reported for 50 percent of established humanitarian assistance strategic objective indicators. This is a significant improvement over the 10 percent with baseline and actual

data in 1996. Of the strategic objectives with data, targets were met or exceeded in 81 percent.

Monitoring by country and regional programs allows USAID to demonstrate success in reaching its intended beneficiaries. Table 6.1 shows the number of beneficiaries of USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Response emergency programs, which provide food, health, water, and sanitation. In addition, the Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States provided assistance to 8.4 million people.

Of 24 strategic objectives in support of the humanitarian assistance goal,³ technical reviews by the regional bureaus judged that 29 percent exceeded performance expectations, 50 percent met expectations, and 21 percent fell short of expectations in 1997.

III. HIGHLIGHTS

Humanitarian assistance is a relatively new goal area under the Agency Strategic Plan. A wide array of cross-cutting programs are included under the three objectives, from the short-term provision of relief to victims of natural disasters to longer term programs that encourage recovery, rehabilitation, and development.

In 1997, USAID reached more than 11.5 million people with food aid through Title II PL 480 programs, implemented primarily by U.S. PVOs and the World Food Program in 28 countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe. The program provided 781,360 metric

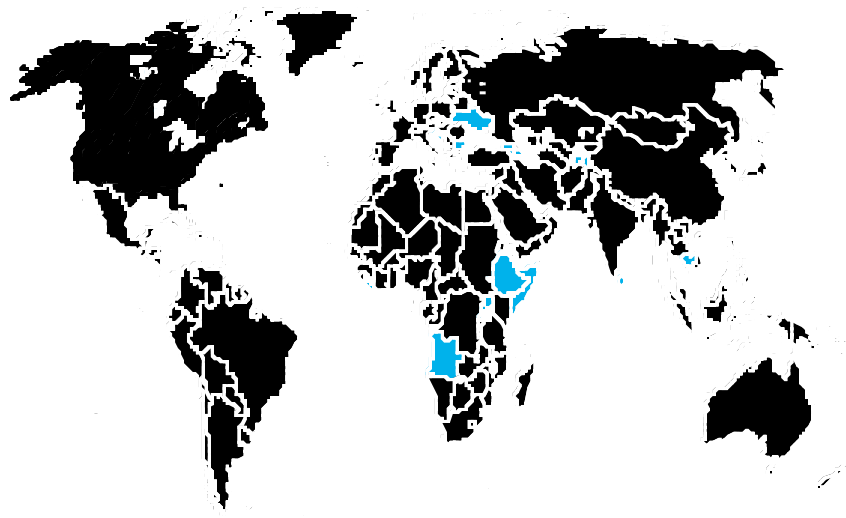
tons of Title II emergency food aid valued at \$404.1 million.⁵

The World Refugee Survey 1998 estimates there were 13.6 million refugees and asylum seekers in 1997.⁶ USAID provided emergency food aid to more than 10 million (a full 76 percent of them), but data were not available for some programs. Much of this assistance was provided through the World Food Program.

USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance provides emergency assistance primarily in health, sanitation, shelter, and water. In 1997, the Office

MAP 6.1

Objectives 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3



Country Programs

Objective 6.1: Potential Impact of Crises

Reduced	
Armenia	Georgia
Bulgaria	Somalia
Ethiopia	Uganda

Objective 6.2: Urgent Needs in Times of Crisis Met

Angola	Georgia
Armenia	Somalia
Bosnia	Tajikistan
Ethiopia	Uganda

Objective 6.3: Security & Basic Institutions re-Established

Armenia	Liberia
Angola	Rwanda
Azerbaijan	Somalia
Cambodia	Sri Lanka
Croatia	Tajikistan
Georgia	Ukraine

Regional Programs

(objective 6.1 only)

REDSO/ESA
African Sustainable Development

spent \$140 million to help more than 18 million victims of 48 officially declared disasters in 46 countries. Of these disasters, 13 were complex emergencies, 27 were natural disasters, and eight were man-made emergencies.⁷

In addition, the Office works to reduce the impact of disasters on victims and economic assets in disaster-prone countries. In partnership with international agencies and other U.S. government agencies, USAID invested in a number of programs to enhance countries' capacity to manage their own disasters and hazards. These programs range from investing in drought early warning systems that can possibly head off a famine to training local relief workers to manage disaster response more effectively.

USAID ensures that critical political processes are in place to lead to enduring economic, political, and social progress. The Office of Transition Initiatives seeks to enhance democratic processes by rapidly implementing interventions that are designed to meet specific needs. In 1997, the office promoted peace and security, with significant progress toward advancing political transitions in **Angola, Bosnia, Guatemala, Liberia, and Rwanda**. In all five countries, freedom of movement improved with the availability of objective, timely information on the economic, political, and social situation.⁸

In 1997, the Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States supported more than 8.4 million of the most vulnerable populations in central and eastern Europe and the new independent states, at a cost of more than \$79 mil-

lion. All the countries in this region were undergoing economic, political, and social transition. Several are also experiencing conflict—**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia–Herzegovina, Georgia, and Tajikistan.**

Natural Disasters

On November 12, 1996, an earthquake struck the Pacific Ocean close to Lima, **Peru**, the worst to strike the region since 1940. It killed and injured people in several cities, affecting more than 81,000 people. USAID provided emergency relief supplies, such as tents and blankets for 56,000 displaced persons.

In early January 1997, drought in **Kenya** caused widespread crop failure, water scarcity, and deteriorating pasture, affecting 1.6 million people. USAID provided \$1.8 million to support drought relief and promote recovery. Through the World Food Program, USAID provided 5,800 metric tons of emergency food aid valued at more than \$2.5 million. Assistance efforts and the timely return of rains prevented a large-scale crisis.⁹

USAID provides humanitarian assistance even in hostile areas. On May 10, 1997, an earthquake in eastern **Iran** left more than 19,000 houses damaged and 60,000 people homeless. Within four days, USAID provided \$100,000 for blankets, food, tents, winter clothing, and other essential items for the survivors.¹⁰

Throughout 1997, the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** suffered from extreme food shortages and generalized economic decline. Chronic, systemic deficiencies exacerbated by

several years of natural catastrophes left millions vulnerable to malnutrition and starvation. Floods in 1996 damaged more than 400,000 hectares (1,550 square miles) of arable land, left 500,000 people homeless, and caused more than \$1.7 billion in damage to crops and infrastructure. Because of the loss of crops and infrastructure in 1997, an estimated 2.5 million women and children were at serious risk of starvation. In coordination with UNICEF, the World Food Program, and other donors, the United States provided more than \$52 million in assistance. A consortium of American PVOs monitored U.S. aid to ensure that it reached vulnerable groups, such as young children and the elderly.¹¹

Man-Made Disasters

Although man-made disasters do not generally cause significant physical damage, they do affect people's lives. Often countries and communities do not have the capacity to respond to them. For example, a fire in **Guinea–Bissau** left an entire community homeless, killed domestic animals, and destroyed grain stores. USAID restored people's homes and livelihoods by providing repair materials and replacing livestock.¹²

Following the collapse of high-risk investment schemes in late 1996, **Albania** was plunged into armed chaos in March 1997. Individuals and families suffered significant financial losses. Demonstrations escalated into violence. More than 2,000 people were seriously wounded and 180 people were killed. Thousands fled by boat across the Adriatic Sea to Italy. USAID provided supplies to hospitals treating victims of the armed violence.¹³

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Complex Emergencies

Complex emergencies involve a combination of factors, including political and ethnic violence and a breakdown of governance and social infrastructure. Affected populations need relief assistance while economic, political, or social issues are being resolved. For example, in **Azerbaijan**, there were more than 700,000 refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of the continued dispute between

Azerbaijan and **Armenia** over the Nagorno Karabakh region. USAID implemented new programs during 1997 to do emergency repairs for health, safety, and sanitation to public buildings used to house refugees and internally displaced persons. By the end of 1997, more than 21,000 families benefited from rehabilitated housing that had safe electrical systems, working plumbing, and basic winterization.¹⁴

Increasingly, USAID is designing its humanitarian assistance programs to encourage recovery and rehabilitation, and to develop a capacity to address future needs. For example, the Agency's relief programs incorporate the development principles of building local capacity and involving beneficiaries in program decision-making. USAID programs integrate emergency response and long-term development, sometimes undertaking them simultaneously.

Under Title II emergency funding, the Agency is exploring and testing new program approaches to bridge relief and

development. For example, USAID is implementing a transition program to respond to **Angola's** changing situation as it draws away from years of war and struggles with socioeconomic problems and instability. The program is meeting critical food needs while addressing longer term issues. One project, for example, incorporates four complementary components. It provides emergency food aid to the most vulnerable, runs food-for-work activities to rehabilitate rural infrastructure and create seasonal employment, rehabilitates farming systems through revitalization of agricultural production, and monitors food security indicators for project planning and design.

The project has been so successful that 17,600 beneficiaries of free food distribution have been graduated to the food-for-work activities. Of the original 68,000 who required emergency food aid, only 37,000 continue to need it. The project also helped 56,000 internally displaced persons with families resettle and integrate into new communities through agriculture infrastructure rehabilitation.¹⁵

These project results are reflected at the national level. At the beginning of 1997, USAID was providing free assistance to 540,000 people. By the end of 1997, this had fallen to 200,000 recipients. USAID was then able to radically shift its assistance. Initially, it provided large-scale distribution of agricultural input packs, emergency health interventions, therapeutic feeding, and other emergency activities. Subsequently, USAID was able to move to reconstruction, agricultural extension, and community rehabilitation.^{16, 17}

USAID activities in southern **Sudan** illustrate how it links relief assistance to longer term objectives. The Agency not only provided food aid but also supported rehabilitation of local production, particularly in agriculture and livestock, and contributed to the development of local capacity in health and sanitation.

In 1997, USAID programs facilitated the resettlement of 80,000 internally displaced persons in their original areas and the gradual repatriation of 90,000 Sudanese refugees from northern **Uganda**. The Agency provided food and agricultural assistance to 25,000 former internally displaced persons and refugees. These programs, undertaken in concert with the U.S. Integrated Strategic Plan for Sudan, aimed at increasing local capacity for food self-reliance and facilitating viable resettlement options. By reducing ration sizes and distributing seeds and tools, the programs encouraged local food production, even among internally displaced people who did not know where they would eventually resettle.

In southern Sudan, USAID resettlement activities coincided with provision of agricultural tools, seeds, and medical services. In 1997, USAID programs provided primary and secondary health care to 1.8 million war-affected victims in government-held areas and 2.6 million in rebel-held areas in the south. A locally trained mobile medical team provided public health care for an additional 144,080 war-affected people in areas where security is threatened. USAID programs provided potable water and sanitation to 49,000 war-affected people.^{19, 20}

Rwanda: Women in Transition

Women and children make up at least 70 percent of refugee populations. The number of female-headed households rises dramatically in transition countries. In Rwanda, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives responded to the critical needs of female-headed households following the tragic events of 1994 by establishing the Women in Transition program in partnership with the Ministry of Family, Gender, and Social Affairs. The program provided grants to 300 rural women's associations that provided housing, income generation, livestock, seeds, and tools, directly benefiting 40,000 people. This program shows that women can be active and successful participants in Rwanda's transition to peace and stability. An unintended but equally important consequence was that even refugees who were not direct recipients felt an increased sense of security, allowing them to return to their own communities more confidently.¹⁸

Liberia illustrates the challenges and the potential for progress in a complex emergency. Throughout 1995 and 1996, close to 2 million people required emergency assistance. That number began to drop in 1997 as the disarmament process took hold and a new president was elected. USAID shifted its emphasis from emergency assistance to postwar transition, rehabilitating institutions and infrastructure. In partnership with other donors, such as the European Union and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, USAID permanently resettled 150,000 internally displaced persons in rural areas by the end of 1997.²¹

The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that rice production, which had fallen by 70 percent during the war, increased in 1997 to 60 percent of pre-war levels. Consequently, estimated

"In the last several years we have learned a great many lessons about working in the difficult and politically charged environment of transition countries. Not all of these lessons have been easy ones. In places like Angola and Liberia we have seen how easy it is for nations in transition to suffer major setbacks. But as Franklin Delano Roosevelt said: 'It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it and try another. But above all, try something.'"

—J. Brian Atwood,
USAID
Administrator

food aid needs for 1998 were considerably reduced. However, as donors gained access to villages, they found extremely high levels of severe malnutrition. For example, in Lower Bong and Upper Margibi, 20 percent of children

showed wasting and 37 percent showed swelling, both signs of malnutrition. After donors, including USAID, implemented general ration and selective feeding programs, only 6.4 percent of children showed these symptoms.²²

IV. COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION: CASE STUDIES

Countries in transition face threats as well as opportunities as they undergo rapid changes and have a corresponding mix of relief, rehabilitation, and development needs. Increasingly, USAID is helping countries move through transitions, rather than merely providing relief assistance. For countries emerging from war, conflict, or other crises, the transition from relief to development presents complex challenges. Rwanda's USAID Mission describes the transition as a "mosaic of progress and failure...of advance and retreat."²³

Since the concept of *transition* is complex, and interventions difficult to categorize, this chapter presents several case studies to demonstrate the range of problems, USAID responses, and what the Agency has learned from its experience in this area.

El Salvador

El Salvador shows the shape of a mature program that has moved through transition and appears prepared to increase its commitment to development. A five-year project, beginning after the 1992 Peace Accords were signed, ended in September 1997. The USAID Mission's efforts to help El Salvador make the transition from war to peace were successful. Peace, a primary prerequisite for development, is now an integral part of the society.

USAID took a multi-pronged approach, supporting economic transition. During the project's five years, more than 107,000 people, both ex-combatants and civilians, received training and technical assistance in agriculture and small business development. In 1997 alone, more than 6,000 people received assistance.

Under the land transfer program, mandated by the Peace Accords, 36,059 ex-combatants and squatters received land. USAID helped ensure that beneficiaries held their land free and clear of all debt. In 1997, USAID helped 1,277 recipients on 29 properties receive individual titles under a pilot land-parceling activity. In addition, 9,000 people wounded during the war were rehabilitated. Reintegration was made possible through education and training programs, land ownership, and microenterprise credit.

USAID channeled nearly \$100 million through 137 nongovernmental organizations for a wide variety of activities in support of ex-combatants and civilians, thus building civil society. More than 175,000 Salvadorans participated in 1,378 municipal open town meetings nationwide. In local elections, more than half of registered voters or 39 percent of eligible voters voted in what turned out to be free and fair elections. Although voter turnout was lower than

expected, lack of confidence in the system, which was a major concern in the 1994 elections, was no longer an issue. Limited candidate choices and the fact that it was a local, not a national, election contributed to the low turnout.

USAID supported judicial reform, another historic step in the political transition. Reforms include new criminal procedures and sentencing codes, provisions for oral adversarial procedures, respect for due process, accelerated case processing, and the availability of mediation and alternatives to pretrial detention. After extensive work during 1997, reforms took effect in April 1998.

Working through an extensive NGO network, USAID increased access to legal services by training 4,500 community, municipal, and NGO leaders on citizen rights and institutional responsibilities described in the new criminal legislation. In 1997 the Public Defender's Office provided free legal counsel to more than 8,000 citizens, twice the workload delivered in 1995.

Judicial reform substantially reduced case processing times. The wait in juvenile courts is now three months, less than one fifth the time it is for adult offenders. The courts have also been able to accelerate resolution, closing more than 70,000 backlogged cases since 1993, including 19,000 cases in 1997 alone. A 1997 national survey showed confidence in the courts has increased. Nearly half the citizens interviewed said they were confident of receiving a fair trial, compared with 30 percent in a 1995 survey.

USAID supported the social sector with 2,900 small-scale infrastructure

As a result of 1997 elections, **El Salvador** was promoted to the list of "free" countries, from "partly free," in the 1998 *Freedom House Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties*.

activities that benefited one fifth of the population, those hurt most by the war. USAID activities included building and repairing schools, health clinics, potable water systems, roads and bridges, and hundreds of miles of new, rural electrical service. About 10 percent of the infrastructure activities were completed in the final year of the project.

As a result, El Salvador exemplifies a country well on its way to establishing the principles of transition, and attention and investments can turn from overcoming what was lost in the war to effective development.

Guatemala

With the signing of peace accords in December 1996, **Guatemala** began an aggressive campaign to comply with the immediate and short-term objectives to advance national reconciliation. USAID's Special Peace Objective helped nearly 4,600 ex-combatants and special military police demobilize and resettle permanently within 15 months. They also benefited from the USAID-supported Land Fund, established in 1997. To date, 2,600 people, 58 percent of whom are ex-combatants, hold new land titles. In addition, USAID supported vocational training for 1,500 ex-fighters and military police.

Postconflict Transitions and Criminal Behavior

There is a direct corollary between postwar decreases in military violence and increasing violence caused by criminal activities. In Guatemala, programs helped ex-combatants make a legitimate transition to legitimate employment. At a time when crime is rampant, none of the ex-combatants involved in USAID-funded activities were implicated in criminal activities.

In the initial phase of the peace process, USAID was instrumental in helping set up the entities responsible for implementing the Peace Accords through SEPAP, Secretaria de la Paz. Nineteen new “peace commissions” are now responsible for channeling civil society participation in public policy formulation, including proposing recommendations for constitutional changes, new laws, and executive branch programs. The Secretaria, implemented with the UN Development Program, has reduced potential conflicts in 25 high-risk communities by promoting dialog and productive investments.

The Historical Clarification Commission was established to address human rights abuses. Nearly 16,000 Guatemalans came forward to offer testimony on their experiences during the 36 years of civil war. USAID provided \$1 million toward financing the operational costs of the commission while the U.S. government provided thousands of newly declassified documents.

Social rehabilitation has begun with such programs as Communities in Transition and small-scale work projects to rehabilitate and expand infrastructure by building rural roads

and bridges, ensure water supplies, and provide electricity. In 1997, 45,000 people benefited from this program.

In an effort to promote a culture of tolerance through education and training, USAID has a scholarship program that has allowed 575 Mayan students to enroll in undergraduate and graduate degree training and 200 community education promoters to receive bilingual teacher certification.

USAID began to address economic transitions in a variety of ways. For example, the Agency monitors increasing tax revenues to measure the Guatemalan government’s ability to finance the terms of the peace accords. The Agency has also achieved advances in microenterprise projects, “village banking” programs, and productive agricultural alternatives in areas of former conflict. In 1997, USAID provided 1,478 loans to small producers, 50 percent more than planned.

In supporting the political transition, USAID is working under the democracy objective to ensure that the justice system works and is accessible to all. Justice centers are being opened in department capitals and outlying areas. Two were established in 1997. The newly created Justice Sector Coordinating Group (Instancia Coordinadora) is making significant inroads in justice reform as it brings together the three entities of the national justice system for the first time.

Angola

After 30 years of prolonged civil conflict, a comprehensive peace agreement was signed in late 1994. USAID designed a transition program to further the U.S. government’s political engage-

ment in **Angola** and to support national reconciliation. USAID designed its strategy and provided humanitarian assistance as a means to explore opportunities for transitional activities.

The transition program in Angola achieved mixed results. The humanitarian assistance component performed well during 1997. USAID supported national reconciliation by strengthening civil society and political institutions. Overall, Angola's performance on the democracy and governance front was noteworthy in 1997: members of the opposition party, the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), were incorporated into the legislature; the government made progress in extending state administration; debates were held on the budget; and parliamentary debates were broadcast to the public.

Despite these advances, many of USAID's own program targets were not met. The Agency's reconciliation activities had a significant impact in 1997, but a number of activities were delayed. Slow establishment of provincial and local authorities and other indications of a lack of political will inhibited progress toward USAID's objectives.

For example, one of USAID's program goals was to increase administrative leadership capacity at local and national levels. USAID supported activities that galvanized more than 400 people from the entire political spectrum to share ideas on a range of issues, including protection of basic human rights. However, it was not possible to begin strengthening the capacity of local and provincial administrators because their positions had not yet been established. Similarly, the Agency had to slow down proposed activities aimed at

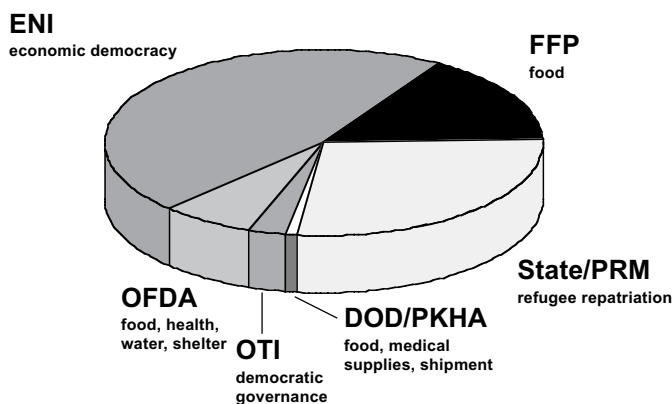
improving electoral processes because the slow pace of demobilization and demilitarization made the government reluctant to plan elections.

Despite the challenges presented by the slow-moving peace process, USAID did achieve impressive results, particularly in the areas of promoting human rights and training journalists how to report news in a balanced way. USAID's transition program in Angola demonstrates that well-targeted, well-managed programs can achieve significant positive results, but a broad political will for peace is the critical element in a successful transition. Clearly the breakdown of the political consensus and resumption of fighting in late 1998 show that the peace process was not as well consolidated as many had hoped.

Bosnia–Herzegovina

In **Bosnia–Herzegovina**, USAID worked to support a fragile peace accord that required a high degree of flexibility to meet fast-changing needs. Although the war ended in December 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, living conditions remain insecure.

Figure 6.1
Summary of U.S. Government Assistance to Bosnia



Although progress has been made, there are still 1 million Bosnian refugees and internally displaced persons. Some of the critical issues for returnees are safety and security, housing shortages, inadequate municipal infrastruc-

Reconciling Ethnic Conflicts: Bosnia–Herzegovina and Croatia

USAID evaluated the role of ethnicity in modern intrastate conflicts and how peace-building efforts and specific approaches can bridge ethnic gaps. The evaluation reviewed USAID and other donor activities in private sector reactivation, alternative-media support, and civil society strengthening. One finding that emerged clearly was that all ethnic factions have a strong and active desire for an enduring peace. In addition, the evaluation noted that

- Small private business and professional organizations with an integrated leadership and organizational structure promote interethnic cooperation. Linkages that promote trade, commerce, or marketing with other associations—particularly across ethnic geographic boundaries—can help dissolve restrictions on trade and communications.
- The economic viability and income potential of enterprises is directly linked to their success in attracting and retaining interethnic members. Having boards with various ethnic factions participating ensures that each group's interests are represented. As long as the enterprise is successful, production chains relying on various ethnic minorities create permanent links between groups.
- Permanent communication networks are essential for initiating and maintaining linkages, especially those channels that cannot be controlled by outside political forces. A long-term media strategy that promotes open and credible alternative sources of news should concentrate on building democratic, sustainable media with professional journalists.
- A highly nationalistic, strongly separatist political leadership is one of the greatest obstacles to reconciliation, at both the community and national levels. The establishment of ethnically based states from the former Yugoslavia and strong nationalistic political leadership created barriers through control of policy, regulations, and laws.

ture services, scarce employment opportunities, and a fragile economy. In 1997 the U.S. government, including USAID, the State Department, and the Department of Defense, provided \$283 million to Bosnia. USAID assistance alone totaled \$202 million to address the immediate and long-term needs of refugees and internally displaced persons. The Agency provided emergency food aid, health, water and sanitation, and seeds and tools, and also supported land mine removal, democratic reform (indigenous media and civil society organizations), economic stabilization, election support, human rights, and police training.²⁴

One USAID objective was to rehabilitate communities and support economic stabilization. U.S. PVOs, in partnership with local NGOs, ran programs that repaired 24 district heating facilities and heating units in the apartments of 190,000 Sarajevo residents, repaired five boiler houses in newly integrated Serb neighborhoods, and repaired 20,000 square meters of apartment roofs. Owing to these efforts, the residents of 4,000 apartments in 55 buildings in one of Sarajevo's most war-torn neighborhoods were provided with warmth, security, and hygienic conditions.

USAID supported the rehabilitation of community buildings and public facilities in mixed ethnic municipalities. PVOs worked in an ethnically divided community to rehabilitate and repair schools, housing, a local hospital, joint community facilities, and small infrastructure projects. Through PVOs, the Agency rehabilitated six war-damaged schools in one of the safe havens. Later, USAID assistance repaired electrical and water systems to encourage the return of 10,000 former residents to the

valley. In Sarajevo, windows and glass broken during the war were replaced in civic structures, such as schools and hospitals, and in residential structures inhabited by more than 48,000 elderly and other vulnerable people.

These activities contributed to the U.S. government goals of increasing opportunities for productive employment and encouraging the return of displaced persons.

Cambodia

Following the May 1993 elections, the United States made a strong commitment to **Cambodia's** future with significant coordinated assistance provided through USAID, the Department of State, the U.S. Information Agency, and the Department of Defense (military training and demining). The cornerstone of U.S. government assistance, as identified in USAID/Cambodia's 1995 strategy, was support for the country's fledgling democracy, particularly the elections process. The survival of a democratic Cambodia became one of the U.S. government's most important foreign policy objectives in East Asia. USAID established its program, adding a number of more traditional sectoral programs and objectives to support this objective. It also sought opportunities to support the country's pressing economic growth and humanitarian needs.

The transition strategy assumed a small window of opportunity for the newly formed government, perhaps no more than three years, during which the fundamental building blocks of a democratic society needed to be established. These building blocks were identified as electoral processes, responsive gov-

ernance, respect for human rights, a functioning legal system and legislature, and a strong core of civil society organizations. The return of the country's traditional authoritarian public life and the coalition nature of the government, which tended to hinder democratic debate and public discussion, presented major challenges.

These observations proved prescient. In July 1997, Hun Sen, leader of the Cambodian People's Party, seized power, upsetting the unstable political balance between himself and his coalition partner, Norodom Ranariddh. The violent dissolution of the coalition government left the Association of South East Asian Nations and the United Nations with the responsibility of ensuring that Cambodia would emerge whole and democratic from this political contest of wills. However, there was no plan or any real leverage to accomplish this task.

USAID carefully coordinated its response with the Department of State. It cut assistance dramatically in all areas except humanitarian assistance and certain democracy activities, and terminated direct assistance to the government of Cambodia, except in maternal and child health and HIV/AIDS prevention. These actions had several unanticipated outcomes, two of which provide valuable lessons for countries undergoing transition. First, in an environment where the government cannot be considered a responsible partner, USAID realigned its priorities. Recognizing the need for continued support to war and land-mine victims, for example, USAID established the non-governmental Disability Action Council. This shift in responsibility, with the NGO community taking the lead, was an important step toward sustainable development in this sector.

"We must maintain a balance among security, political, economic, and social objectives. And we must have the right tools."

—Madeleine K. Albright,
Secretary of State

Second, USAID's long-term support for many of the country's human rights organizations paid off after the violence of July 1997. These groups monitored the government's actions, highlighting human rights abuses during this unstable period. While it is impossible to know what would have happened had these organizations not existed, they played a crucial role in Hun Sen's decision to hold national elections in July 1998. Several NGOs actively monitored the environment leading up to those elections.

The U.S. government's position on assistance to the Cambodian government remained unchanged as of September 1998. Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party won the July 1998 elections, which are being challenged by the two major opposition parties. It is unclear how Cambodia's political crisis will be resolved. Support to the nascent nongovernmental sector, as opposed to the government, is the only accepted mechanism for providing this troubled country with the humanitarian and developmental assistance it so desperately needs.

V. AGENCY LEARNING IN PROMOTING EFFECTIVE TRANSITIONS

• A Framework of Phases and Actions

Transitions require simultaneous actions in relief, stabilization, demilitarization, and political and economic transformation. Using its experience, applied research, and evaluations, USAID is developing conceptual frameworks to guide its strategic planning and programs. The Agency shares best practices and lessons learned with the donor community at large. Many innovations, such as the disaster assistance response team concept—which is a quick-response, multisectoral team that assesses disasters and ensures timely delivery of essential needs—have been picked up by other agencies.

An integrated approach to economic, political, and social rehabilitation in postconflict situations is necessary. This approach should include support for political and economic decision-making in communities, equitable power-sharing, and assistance to maintain

livelihoods and markets, even early in the relief effort. However, even given political and economic stabilization, some situations have found that establishment of social safety nets has been important in moving from relief to economic rehabilitation.

There is an emerging role for humanitarian and economic development assistance in consolidating peace and maintaining the momentum to implement peace accords. This is particularly relevant as combatants are demobilized and a better balance is established between civilian and military roles and responsibilities. Lessons learned in Haiti and elsewhere clarify the need to establish a sense of security through a civilian-controlled police force and an accountable, disciplined central military force. USAID is applying these lessons in a number of transition situations.

USAID has learned that it is important to keep warring factions apart during the cool-down period to allow for a

reconciliation process to emerge. While relief is being provided, consideration should be given to support for the political transformation. Key objectives are promoting citizen involvement in overseeing government actions and developing the beginnings of a political culture based on democratic values operating under a rule of law. This should lead to a number of actions, including civic education and human rights interventions to support international and local human rights monitoring and reporting. Under rule of law, interventions should support judicial independence and local capacity to create a formal and informal judicial system. USAID has also gained expertise in the role of elections in the reconciliation process, the appropriate machinery for free and fair elections, and timing for elections.

Integrated Strategic Planning Within the Agency and U.S. Government

The many aspects of complex emergencies and the large number of U.S. government agencies involved in addressing them has encouraged integrated strategic planning. USAID's Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI) developed a set of principles to link relief and development. One, strategic coordination among all players, inside and outside the U.S. government, ensures maximum integration and use of available resources. Integrated and joint analysis and planning responds to the need to operate more effectively, particularly during the transition between acute emergency and long-term sustainable development. Although

USAID has engaged in integrated planning in the past, the Integrated Strategic Plan formalizes the approach, ensuring improved coordination.

Integrated Strategic Plans ensure that all USAID resources for relief and development are channeled to mutually agreed-on objectives and intermediate results. The development process itself reinforces an interbureau, country-team orientation in transition situations. It has facilitated holistic thinking about USAID's program, rather than a narrower focus on individual office or bureau mandates. In addition, it has generated productive dialog and strategic thinking among partners, and enhanced coordination and integration of USAID resources and other donor efforts. It has enabled the Agency and its partners to keep government counterparts informed and set the stage for increased USAID field management of centrally funded resources.

Integrated Strategic Plans and the principles developed by GHAI are experimental. The approach uses a rigorous, transparent, and somewhat different analytic process that includes more ownership at the country level. It also ensures the continued incorporation of U.S. foreign policy objectives in designing USAID country programs. The integrated plans provide specific mandates for action, but are sufficiently flexible that they can be adjusted if the situation warrants change. They are good management tools for decision-making. However, their flexible, inter-agency design makes monitoring impact extremely difficult and complicates results reporting.

“What is needed during this phase [transitions] is not a passing of batons from relief to development assistance, but rather partnerships in which each group brings its particular expertise and capacity to bear on the appropriate parts of the rehabilitation problem in a manner that is consistent and well coordinated.”

—Report of the
UN Secretary
General

Strategic Coordination: Working With Other Donors in Transitions

From experiences in places such as Somalia and El Salvador, donors are beginning to develop consensus on procedures for dealing with transitions and postconflict situations. In 1997, USAID sponsored conferences to address lessons learned and challenges in postconflict societies and established an informal network of organizations working in transitions. The World Bank is developing a draft set of operational and policy principles, emphasizing areas where donors and creditors can restore the economic and social infrastructure. For example, the lack of financial relationships has been a major stumbling block to fledgling governments seeking economic recovery. Progress has been made in countries such as Bosnia–Herzegovina and Rwanda, but these are exceptions.

Many challenges remain. Each donor has its own sets of requirements for planning, procurement, and funding. There is real competition for resources among donor agencies in supporting transitions. The mandates of bilateral organizations created during the Bretton Woods era are difficult to adapt to the transitional gray area between relief and development.

USAID has played a lead role in sharing knowledge with other donors and partners. This kind of joint leadership can augment individual donor strengths and leverage partners and funding.

Building Local Capacity

USAID has learned the importance of building local capacity early through a participatory process. Agency experience shows that participation generates local empowerment to control programs, mobilizes local resources, and helps sustain activities. Increasingly, donors recognize they can provide a supporting role in transitions, but not a leading one. Donor efforts to fill the gap created by a lack of government or governance and become the driving force without seeking local participation and leadership have failed.

In countries such as Cambodia, where the government was no longer a responsible partner, USAID shifted its partnership to the nongovernmental community to support rehabilitation. In southern and eastern Africa, the Agency for Cooperation and Research Development initially concentrated on national issues, then expanded its role and developed regional networks to support transitions.

In the aftermath of conflict in Somalia and Rwanda, several donors met to consider ways to support the rebuilding and reconciliation process in war-torn societies, establishing the War-Torn Societies Project using pilot country case studies in Africa and Latin America. This nonprofit organization, based at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development in Geneva, uses an external, neutral party to facilitate dialog among warring factions. In Guatemala and Eritrea it supports the implementation of peace ac-

cords using a participatory approach with neutral observers helping to determine appropriate donor opportunities to address root causes of the conflict.

U.S. PVOs have been collaborating closely with local NGO counterparts, transferring technologies and skills to enhance institutional capacity. This collaboration extends to emergency management, vulnerability assessment, development of early warning systems for disaster preparedness, development of farming and food systems to mitigate adverse effects of natural disaster, and

community rehabilitation. Partnerships help countries reduce their vulnerability to disasters and increase their capacity to respond effectively.

Since humanitarian assistance programs are implemented primarily by nonprofit U.S. PVOs and local NGOs, they are also among the Agency's most cost-effective programs. For example, in 1997, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance helped 18.7 million people at an estimated cost of \$7.46 per beneficiary.²⁵

VI. CONCLUSION

In 1997, USAID reached millions of people with humanitarian assistance. Programs varied greatly in type and duration, level of funding, and complexity. Programs in several countries reported shifts from emergency activities to reconstruction, agricultural extension, and community rehabilitation. Given the rapidly changing environments in which humanitarian assistance programs operate—security, economic, political, and social—measuring the impact and progress of USAID's programs in quantitative terms can be misleading.

USAID and other donors made progress in learning about working in the difficult and politically charged environment of transition countries. In-depth analysis and operational experience during 1997 leads to the following conclusions:

- **Postconflict Transitions Require Different Strategic Planning Assumptions**

Postconflict transitions generally are very political in nature and require short planning horizons (one to three years) and different analytic assumptions than are typical for either humanitarian or development assistance. Agency experience in Africa and Latin America suggests that strategic planning is possible and useful as a management tool, and that it provides necessary flexibility to effectively integrate USAID programs for these transitions.

- **Transitions Take a Long Time and Are Management-Intensive**

Across the board, the Agency has learned that, despite short *planning* horizons, postconflict transitions themselves take at least five years, absorb

significant management resources, require day-to-day oversight, and need extensive coordination between field Missions and USAID/Washington and among USAID, the Department of State, and other donors.

- **The Agency Needs to Integrate and Learn From Experience in Transitions**

The Agency has a wealth of experience and information on postconflict transitions that it needs to apply in integrating country strategies and programs. The Agency is incorporating the lessons it has learned about transitions as it provides information, policy guidance, training, and technical assistance.

- **Crisis and Conflict Prevention**

The State Department and USAID support adoption and implementation of a “crisis prevention prism” to systematically assess and monitor potential sources of conflict, such as indigenous problems, tensions, or vulnerable areas. To date, crisis analysis has been integrated with conflict prevention interventions in only a few instances. Given U.S. interest in other countries and USAID’s goal of longer term sustainable development, crisis analysis and conflict prevention need to be more systematically integrated into country and regional strategic frameworks.